Mr. Edward West's

LEGACY,

BEING A

Diſcourſe

OF THE

PERFECT MAN.

LONDON,

Printed for *Thomas Parkhurſt*, and *Thomas Cockeril*, at the *Bible* and *three Crowns* at the Lower End of *Cheapſide*, and at the *three Legs* in the *Poultrey* near the *Stocks-Market*. 1679.

T. Jolley Esq. F.S.A.

The gift of
Bayes Cotton Esq
A. gift to J Goodwin

Mr. Edward Weſt's

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EDINBURGH

THE PREFACE.

Right Honorable, &c.

I was your Lordſhips Pleaſure, when I firſt and laſt waited upon you, amongſt other favours to honour me with your Commands for the preparing a ſhort Diſcourſe upon the enſuing Subject, which I thought and hoped to have delivered from the Pulpit, that my Office might have excuſed my boldneſs, and the Ordinance my weakneſs; but I was ſoon bereaved of all ſuch opportunities by the Sovereign pleaſure of my Superiors, and am now on of thoſe many Hundreds that the world judges unworthy to live, becauſe denied the liberty to Preach; an inference not altogether irrational from ſuch a pre-

miſe; ſo harſh a puniſhment ſuppoſes no ſmall crime, publick ſentences give ſome countenance to vulgar conſures,

Turba Remi ſequitur fortunam, ut ſemper, & odit damnatos,

So that of neceſsity we muſt wait the great judgement for the clearing of our innocence, and the expectation of that makes it a ſmall thing that we are judged of Men, or according to Mans jndgement.

The reaſon of my mentioning theſe things, beſides the fooliſh fancy every one has to talk of his own miſeries, is partly to intimate that I am not aſhamed of my preſent Condition, eſpecially before your Honour, who have learned to value Perſons not for their Preferments but Perfections, not according as they are accepted here, but as they ſhall be reſpected hereafter; and partly to excuſe the delay of this duty, which I owed in value, though I could not pay in kind. But I was apt at firſt to think that ſuch prejudices added to

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the infirmities I was conſcious of before, might make the breach of promiſe more tolerable than the performance of Service, and therefore my reſolution was, ſince Providence had reckoned me among the Dead, to confine my Ghoſt to thoſe ſhades which likeneſs and familiarity made me leſs troubleſom and terrible unto; declining the ambitious humour of ſome vain Spectres that chooſe to walk in great houſes, and at ſuch ſeaſons, that to be ſure they ſhall be leaſt welcome in; no, I had pitched on ſolitude, and intended a dolefull Pilgrimage to the end of the Earth, where my preſence or complaints might have moleſted or offended none, and had my Fates conſpired with my wiſhes and intentions, I had ſaved my ſelf the fear, and the State the charges of a Tranſportation,

Providence has prevented me in my purpoſed Seceſſion, I would have fled into the wilderneſs Rev. 12. 6. *the old refuge, but God has ſhut the door*

upon

upon me, that if it be his will I may ſuffer with my Brethren among whom I have ſinned. My firſt reflection upon this diſappointment was, to conſider why I was detained, or what I had to do here? For what do I in the World if my buſineſs is done? and that which occurred on this inquiry was, that I was your Lordſhips Debtor, that I had a Text of yours, which I bleſs God I have traded with to ſome advantage to my ſelf, and therefore thought my ſelf obliged to return it with uſury.

Lo here is a child of your Perfect Man, which I commend for the Fathers ſake into your boſom, it is plainly habited, as expecting favour not for its Dreſs but Feature, and I verily believe that herein it is not only what you expected but deſired; if you had looked for neatneſs and curioſity, you would have choſe a leſs ſerious Text, or a more ingenious, light-hearted Perſon to have handled it.

Satur eſt cum dicit *Horatius* ohe!

We

We have forgot the ſongs of Zion, *if ever we were good at them; let others prance in the ways and things of God that are pampered and over-fed, it ſuffices that we can ſoberly walk in them. If the ſtrain of the Diſcourſe does not ſute your more ſublimed wit and reaſon, be pleaſed to conſider how it fits him on whom you impoſed the Talk. And as your Text propoſed the Perfect Man to me as worthy of remark, who yet ſeemed moſt contemptible while I viewed him in the World, of the ſame Nature perchance this Diſcourſe may be, mean and baſe in its ſtile and Language, but may become acceptable if you conſider its uſe, as the other did admirable when I obſerved his end.*

But whatever are the imperfections and failings in this Adventure, I am content to take them upon my ſelf, rather than trouble your Lordſhip with excuſes; only let me deſire that the Perfect Man may have his due eſteem

ſteem ſtill, and let the offences you take at this lifeleſs repreſentation of him, provoke your Lordſhip to ſhew him with more advantage to the World, in your own Life and Converſation. You may epitomize this Diſcourſe in your own Perſon, and ſhew it wherever you ſhew your Self, to Court and Country for general admiration and Imitation. He muſt be ſome ſuch as you that muſt bring Religion, and ſerious Piety into faſhion among the great Ones of the Land, which ſeem generally to be diſtaſted at it, and to walk in much deſpight of it, through the meaneſs probably of its Profeſſors; your Wit and Honour way wipe off thoſe ſcandals. Some might be willing to go to Heaven in your company that deſpiſe ours; Know therefore that you have an opportunity of doing God great ſervice, and your Peers a ſingular kindneſs by a good example in this degenerate Age.

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It pitties us to ſee the choiceſt Pieces of Mankind, thoſe we cannot look on here without dazling and amazement, to be ſet upon undoing themſelves, to live vainly; to carry it proudly, whoſe God is their belly, whoſe glory is their ſhame, whoſe end is deſtruction. *It pitties us that they will not pitty themſelves, that we have opportunities only to pray for them, and mourn over them; willingly we would burn our own fingers to pluck them out of the fire, if they would accept of our labour of Love; but they ſcorn to be ſaved at Our hands, and ſeem to expect Heaven upon their Birthright, and by Prerogative as it were. For their ſake, for Gods ſake, for your own ſake, be a Leader and Companion to them in the ſtricteſt ways of Holineſs; for I am perſuaded that God is ſo far from making abatement in point of ſervice and obedience to Men of your Rank and Quality, that he does expect, and*

will

will exact more at your hands than any; you cannot be ſaved at the rates of common Men; I wiſh theſe Papers may be a means, or motive to ſet this work ſomething forwarder in your Self, and that your exemplary Life in conformity to the everlaſting Goſpel, may awaken the ſecure World to a like concern, that with fear and trembling they may ſet about their Salvation, and not dally in ſo weighty an affair, while they are ſo intent on trifles, that they work not in jeſt while they play, and ſport themſelves in earneſt, being only ſerious in ludicrous matters. And this is all the deſire and deſign of him that wiſhes he had other advantage beſides leiſure, and will to ſerve you,

Your Lordſhips

in the Lord

E. W.

Mr. Edward Weſt's LEGACY.

Pſalm 37. 37.

Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the end of that Man is peace.

THis is a Pſalm as generally uſefull as any in the whole Book, directed againſt the moſt common evils that every day gives us temptation to.

It is commonly obſerved that wicked

ed men which bid defiance as it were to God, do thrive and proſper under him, this every one can obſerve, and we cannot deny it.

How great a ſtumbling-block this has been, and yet is both to good and bad, is as palpable; how is God hereupon repreſented as an unequal, unholy, unobſervant, careleſs God, which in the next inference does ungod him, and leave the Soul in Atheiſm, and all its curſed effects.

Where this temptation works gentlier and is ſomething allayed by Faith, murmuring, envying, emulating of ſinners is ordinary, their ways keeps in ſome credit, and their perſons in ſome reſpect; we will not believe that ſin is ſo unfruitfull, or ſinners ſo unthrifty as they are made, we ſee ſome gains with our preſent penury, which unacquaintance with better things makes ſeem conſiderable, and even all that can be look-

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ed for. The Satyriſt ſpake our thoughts, *& fruitur diis iratis*, as if God himſelf, and all that he was or could do, was enjoyed by theſe wicked Perſons, and to what end is Holineſs if ſuch Men can attain to happineſs, as we find it argued, *Mal.* 3. 14, 15.

Truly in vain do we intreat it, if we might thus argue. It may as commonly be ſeen, that good and holy Men are the very footſtool, and football of theſe wicked and worldly Giants, their God ſtill looking on, that has told them his *is the earth and its fulneſs*, and by many a promiſe has devolved the inheritance of it upon them; how ſhrewdly this has ſhook the Faith of Gods People, and infeebled their knees to a progreſs in Piety might by divers inſtances be cleared, were it queſtionable, proper or profitable, I wiſh heartily I could not prove it, and

you by freeneſs from this temptation, were incredulous of it. But

Alas! hence is the deluſion of Mankind, that the good we are inclined to, we do not becauſe of the evil that attends it, and the evil we are averſe from we do, becauſe of the good that follows that; this is the firſt diſtraction of our will, that naturally is bent upon ſomething good to us, but by theſe ſtrange appearances know not where to pitch, and while it is thus held *in æquilibrio*, our leaſt temptations have weight enough to bear us to the ground; being not able to determin for our ſelves, we eaſily allow the Fleſh or the Devil to determin for us, as in the firſt birth of ſin was evident. *Gen.* 3. 4, 5, 6. and is obſervable in its progreſs upon all our Souls. Were we ſatisfied in the objects of our choice and refuſal, there would be neither place for a Tempter,

er, nor matter for a temptation; and there is nothing ſo clouds and confounds us as the ſeeming confuſion and indifference of Gods providences, wherein to our carnal eyes he appears alike, or rather to favour that he condemns in his Word, and condemn that he praiſes and requires in it; this puts us to a ſtand, leſt if we ſhould do well, we ſhould fare ill, or doing ill, may fare well.

Though I think as meanly of the freeneſs and power of Mans will, as now influenced as any, yet I cannot but think the number of Sinners would be far leſs, and that of Saints much greater, were all wicked Men preſently miſerable, and all good Men viſibly happy.

But God will have his way, and his ways are equal, nor is it his fault, but our folly that cauſes a ſtumble at ſuch Diſpenſations. Even

theſe ſame Providences that amaze, diſcourage and confound ſome, do admoniſh, quicken and perfect others, mortifying their luſts and fleſhly inclinations, tranſlating their thoughts and affections unto better things, by a conviction of the vanity and vileneſs of what is preſent, from its ſo free and common allowance to the vileſt of men, as you ſee it argued and evidenced 2 *Cor.* 4. *v.* 12, 16, 18. *So then death worketh in us, but life in you, we faint not* for all this (our death will have as good a work as your life) *for though our outward man periſh, yet our inward man is renewed day by day, while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen.* &c.

It is only Senſe that takes offence at theſe things, Faith overlooks them, judges of neither *love* nor *hatred* by what *is before us*, as you have

have an heroical inſtance 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. *although my houſe be not ſo with God,* (ſo flouriſhing, ſo eſtabliſhed) *yet he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant ordered in all things, and ſure, and this is all my Salvation, and all my deſire, although he make it not to grow,* that is, though my condition be never bettered, while I am here.

We ſee ſomething in general concerning the offence that is taken at Gods carriage towards good and bad, and ſomething of the reaſon of it, through our attendance to the fleſh, which has its maintenance from, and ſo dependence upon theſe preſent things.

But the taking away or preventing ſuch offences, is the main deſign of the Pſalmiſt, and our main concern to attend to, and for that take his directions grounded on his experience, as follow

By a reſolute acquieſcence in the wiſdom, and power and truth of God, whereby we conclude it impoſſible for him to err in his Providences, or fail of his Promiſes, and thereupon we reſt in all he does, complaining rather of our own ignorance than his equity, ſaying within our hearts of the ſtrangeſt things that befall us, this may be that God promiſed, this may be the good thing I looked for, I knew not what to ask, this I am ſure is that I ſhould have asked, whatever I thought good, this is that which is good; after this ſort we find *David* ſtaying his heart when it was even ſinking, *Pſal.* 73. 1. *Truly*, or however it be, *God is good to Iſrael, even to ſuch as are of a clean heart*; and this was a common uſage in all puzling caſes, to deny their reaſon and believe againſt hope and ſenſe, yielding any thing rather than aſſent to an unworthy

worthy thought of God, not judging of him by his Providences, but of his Providences from thoſe reverend notions that even Nature has given us of God, as our Prophet gives example. *Iſa.* 45. 15. *Verily thou art a God that hideſt thy ſelf, O God of Iſrael the Saviour*: even when God frowns, they think they ſee him ſmile, or that he compoſes and puts on a countenance on purpoſe to try them, and therefore will believe what he ſays, rather than think to comprehend what he does.

However unreaſonable a courſe this ſeems, there are two reaſons eſpecially make it proper,

1. The inconvenience of the contrary, *Rom.* 9. 20. *what art thou O man that replieſt againſt God?* We muſt be ſure to conclude with him.

2. Our incompetence to the contrary, through Gods acting in darkneſs

neſs and our lying in darkneſs; his *ways are not as our ways*, nor his *thoughts as our thoughts*, and therefore is that check, *Job* 40. 2. *ſhall he that contendeth with the Lord inſtruct him, he that reproveth God let him anſwer it.* This is an act of ſtrong Faith which is to be oppoſed againſt ſtrong and ſtaggering temptations, which we cannot otherwiſe vanquiſh than by offering violence to our ſelves, our own opinions, perſwaſions, reaſons, which the Apoſtle calls caſting down imaginations, and captivating of thoughts. 2 *Cor.* 10. 5.

2. By a temporary ſuſpenſion of our judgements in hopes and expectations of further ſatisfaction, quieting our affections, and reſtraining our paſſions till we ſee clear reaſon for it. There needs only time and attendance to juſtifie God in any of his ways; this therefore is directed

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in this 37. *Pſ. v.* 34. *Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he ſhall exalt the to inherit the land, when the wicked are cut off thou ſhalt ſee it.* Sometimes good Men are not ripe for mercies, nor wicked for ruine; till theſe times come God is in ſuſpenſe what to do as in *Hoſea* 11. 8. And well may we ſuſpend judging of his work till he has done it; *now Men ſee not the bright Light that is in the clouds, but the wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them, as* Job 37. 21.

3. By adverſion unto other duties, that we weary not nor diſtract our ſelves too much by poring upon things too high for us, ſo here v. 3. *truſt in the Lord and do good,* if you cannot find what God is doing, think what your ſelf are to do, with this God takes us off our curioſity in prying into his Buſineſſes, *Job* 28. 28. *Behold the fear of the Lord, that is Wiſdom, and to depart from evil*

evil that is underſtanding. And this digreſſion is often the ready way to find out what we divert from, as *David* by going into the Sanctuary underſtood that which while he induſtriouſly thought to know, was *too painfull* for him. *Pſal.* 73. 16, 17. Theſe three are mainly neceſſary to ſtay the heart, and keep it from fainting in extraordinary caſes. But

4. And laſtly, that which will in a more ordinary way not only ſtay but ſatisfie us, is, due and accurate obſervance of thoſe things and perſons that at the firſt glance we are offended at, the courſe we take with ſtarting horſes, to bring them to view and ſmell the things they were ſo ſhie of: And here *David* foregoes us, and has made very nice obſervations to our hands, whereby he recovered himſelf and we may, And

1. He obſerves that the great power

power and ſeeming advantages of the wicked over the People of God are but meer vapours, *verſe* 12, 15. *The wicked plotteth againſt the juſt, and gnaſheth upon him with his teeth; the Lord laughs at him, for he ſees his day is coming; the wicked have drawn their ſword and bent their bow; their ſword ſhall enter into their own heart, and their bowes ſhall be broken*; This was evident in the wars of *Henry* 3*d.* againſt the *Hugonots*, by the power of the *Guiſes* and confederate Catholicks; which were at laſt his own ruine.

2. He obſerves the goodneſs of thoſe few things that good Men have, and the evil and emptineſs of the wickeds abundance, *v.* 16, 17. *A little that a righteous Man hath is better than the abundance of many wicked.* As he has leſs means, he has withall leſs care, leſs fear, a leſs retinue of

of luſts to live upon him, or however having ſufficient for life, it is his happineſs that he has no proviſion for luſt, it is better ſtarved than kept.

3. He looks forward, (and we with him ought) to the end and iſſue of things, and there he finds the wickeds, however great and glorious; to be a decaying waſting Eſtate, that within a few years will come to nothing; his body will lie rotting in the grave, and his Soul roaring in Hell, deſtitute of all good, preſſed with all evil; and the others however mean and baſe, is a thrifty, growing Eſtate, that improves every day from Pence to Pounds, till it is invaluable.

Look upon the greateſt wicked Prince in the World, I will ſet the moſt poor, contemptible, miſerable Saint that ever trod the Earth againſt him, and do but mark the end,

end, he ſhall carry it from the other by infinite degrees. If we would but look forward to the end of things, we ſhould ſee all promiſes accompliſhed to the Good, all threats executed upon the Bad, that there would be no place for our pittying the one, or envying the other.

And after this conſideration the *Pſalmiſt* thought he need add no more, he looks upon the Wicked as a meer vapour, and paſſes him by as not worth notice, and propoſes the Righteous, however for the preſent it be with them, as the only Men of remark upon this ſole account.

Mark the perfect Man and behold the upright, for the end of that Man is peace.

I am not at all ſtartled at the variety of Tranſlations, though the *Syriack*, *Septuagint* and vulgar *Latin* be on the diſſenting part, but con-

confidently reſt in our preſent *Engliſh* Verſion, as of a more Literal reſolution, clearer ſenſe, and better conſonance to other Scriptures both in this Pſalm and elſewhere, as particularly *v.* 11. & *Rom.* 2. 10.

The expoſition I ſhall diſpatch in anſwer to three Queries.

1. What is meant by the Perfect or Upright man, we muſt take heed that we ſtate not Perfection here as an impoſſible, or common thing; If we place it in a degree that none do or can attain, in whom ſhall we obſerve it? If in ſuch a degree whereto every one attains, wherein is it obſervable? He ſuppoſes ſome ſuch, that he bids us look upon them, few ſuch, that he fears we may look off them, *Mark*, I, where is he? *Behold*; you muſt look for him before you can look upon him, and look a good while too e're you can diſcern any thing remarkable in him;

him; they are, eſpecially in theſe latter times, almoſt as inviſible as the *Roſicrucians*, if it be not as ridiculous to ſpeak of them. *Solomon* upon accurate ſearch of both Sexes ſcarce finds one that he dares ſpeak a good word for, and that he ſtraight recants, knowing not who to pitch on, ſave *Adam* in his innocence, *Eccles* 7. 27, 28, 29. And his Father *Davids* expreſſions in the Text are very far from confidence, *mark the Perfect man*, he corrects himſelf ſtraight, I mean *the Upright*, and of theſe he ſpeaks in the ſingular; he does not intimate Men, nor name Men, *mark the Perfect* (there the original ends) and when he mentions *Man* in the latter clauſe, he forbears the particle that ſhould have related it to *Perfect*, *the end of Man is peace*; as if he queſtioned to aſcribe uprightneſs to Man, or to allow Manhood where he ſaw not

uprightneſs, as if no Man was holy, or there was no man but the holy Man. But my deſign is not to purſue niceties.

Seeing then ſtrict legal Perfection is not to be found amongſt the ſons of Men, and that Evangelical Perfection whereof we ſpeak, is a degree of Righteouſneſs ſupereminent to what is ordinarily practiſed and approved by Men, it remains, and according to the Word might be evinced,

That he is the Perfect man that aims at Perfection, that has reſpect unto all Gods Commands, that ſerves him with his whole heart, that is bent and reſolved upon doing good and eſchewing evil, that ſo far exceeds the generality of Men that he ſeems perfect to them, and through Chriſt ſhall be accepted as ſuch with God.

The handling and illuſtrating this throughly

throughly would be matter for a Treatiſe, and a moſt excellent one has Dr. *Preſton* compoſed upon it.

1. Now for the being ſuch a votary unto God is neceſſary, 1. a diſcovery of ſomething in God that may weaken thoſe temptations from without, whereby Men are generally ſwerved, we muſt ſee Friends, eſtates, liberties, lives and all, yea, much more than all in him, that we may leave all for him; this was thought neceſſary for *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 1. and many acts of his obedience could have been bottomed, and bore out by nothing elſe but the All-ſufficiency of God. And 2. that our hopes and affections the main engines of human actions may be quickened, is neceſſary that we know ſomething of Gods love in Chriſt. for a foundation of our likelihood of being benefitted by thoſe Treaſures we have diſcovered

in God, rich Grace is as working as a rich God. The riches of God work deſires, and ſo abate fleſhly luſts; the riches of Grace work hope, and ſo put us upon a new dependance, and lay us under new influences, that as by looking upon and luſting after carnal things our very minds became carnal, ſo by looking upon and longing after ſpiritual things, as thus lovely and thus likely, our very bodies by the impreſſions made upon our Souls become Spiritual; if once the eye be fixed upon God, vertue will be drawn from him, to the awing, quickening, encouraging, refreſhing, joying, and in a word changing and transforming the Soul into his image that we contemplate, as he ſpeaks 2 *Cor.* 3. 18.

The power of the Faith of theſe two things is not to be expreſſed, Heaven is kept holy, and Earth might be

be ſanctified by it; it alone ſuffices for all obedience, and there is no rational obedience in the leaſt degree, not ſo much as a ſtep towards God but in the ſtrength & power of it; we ſhall never *come* at God if we believe not that *he is* (ſurely or none elſe is) and that *he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, Heb. 11. 6. It is of main concernment therefore the heart be well furniſhed with the Faith and conſtant actual apprehenſion of theſe things.

2. For the declaring ſuch a one, to omit the many qualifications that go to the making him up, theſe two things are of abſolute neceſſity, and concluſive on the one ſide or the other, according to their preſence or abſence.

1. There muſt of neceſſity be an unfeigned love to God and Man; he has nothing of a perfect Man that wants this; and he wants little of

legal Perfection, has attained the Evangelical, whoſe heart is poſſeſſed with it.

To make this out on both hands Scriptures are obvious, and indeed that which the Old Teſtament calls Law, is in the Goſpel compendiouſly called Love, duty is duty as it is the effect of Love, and ſin is ſin as it is contrary to it; the Apoſtle *Paul* ſays expreſly *Gal.* 5. 14. that *all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf*, that is all the duties of the ſecond Table that depend upon this, which he illuſtrates more expreſly *Rom.* 13. 8, 9, 10. *he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law, for this, thou ſhalt not commit adultery*, &c. *and if there be any other Commandment* ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται it is epitomized *in this, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf; Love works no ill, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law.*

Law. While we love we cannot tranſgreſs, for tranſgreſſion is a tranſgreſſion of Love; in both theſe places are underſtood only the Law as it lies between us and our Brother. Conſider it as it lies between God and us, it is as briefly ſummed up by Chriſt himſelf, *Matt.* 22. 37, 40. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, this is the firſt and great Commandment*, great and compreſive are all one here, therefore adding that of loving our Brethren he tells us that on, or rather in theſe two the Law and the Prophets are comprehended, ἐν ταύταις κρέμανται. And this alone is that the Apoſtle *John* drives at in his *Epiſt.* 1. *ch.* 2. under the name of a new Commandment, and not a new one, but an old one, his meaning is, that love was always the ſenſe and end of the Commandments. Doing or forbearing duties either to God or man

as to the matter of them was not ſo much looked after, though ſeemingly moſt intended, but our affections to Himſelf and our Neighbours God would ſecure, and therein only he is ſatisfied; and therefore it is, that it ſuffices Angels and perfect Saints through love to be diſpoſed to ſome ſervices that they have no capacity to perform; but though this was the old and primitive intention of the Law, this Spiritual interpretation and reſolution of it might be called new, and accordingly our ſervice in obedience to the Law there explained, is ſaid to be in the *newneſs of the Spirit, and not in the oldneſs of the Letter*, Rom. 7. 6.

And indeed our perſonal real Perfection, ſo our myſtical is mainly attained by Love; it is therefore *called the bond of Perfectneſs*, Coloſ. 3. 14. It ties the divided members of Mankind one to another, and all to God

God through which Union alone are thoſe Communications that ſolve all perſonal and particular defects, and make at leaſt one perfect Man of us all, as he moſt cloſely and profoundly argues, *Epheſ.* 4. 13, 16.

There is no Perfection but in unity, indeed none perfect but One, and if I may ſpeak of that inexpreſſible myſtery, Unity is the perfection and glory of the ever bleſſed Trinity, and therefore God that in a ſenſe is, & for good reaſon repreſents himſelf as Three to our admiration, collects himſelf into One for our veneration, and his fulleſt title is, *I am and there is none beſides me.*

Beloved, A reſemblable glory and Perfection, ſuch as our Natures are capable of, is attainable by our charitable combination with God and Man; of many, in ſome likeneſs to the Trinity we thus become one; and therefore Chriſt moſtly contended

tended for the renewing of this Grace, and moſt cheerfully acquieſced in the grant of it, as ſeeing hereby the whole body of Believers collected into one Man, as he with the Father and Holy Spirit is one God; conſider how he expreſſes and reſents this. *John* 17.22, 23. *the glory which thou haſt given me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are One, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made Perfect in one.*

And take notice in the firſt anſwer to this Prayer or Faith of Chriſt, that the main cloſe in order to this perfect Union was through common affections. *Acts* 4. 32. *The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one ſoul, neither ſaid any of them that ought of the things he poſſeſſed was his own, but they had all things common.* In perfect Love all our properties, intereſts, and very

ry ſelves are loſt, Souls are as it were mingled, that as to offices of Kindneſs or ſenſe of injuries, we know not our neighbours from our ſelves, and thus the Saints ſuffer, and our Saviour ſighs. *Acts* 9. 4, 5. *why perſecuteſt thou me*? And ſo *Paul* ſympathized with the Brethren. 2 *Cor.* 11. 29. *Who is weak and I am not weak, who is offended and I burn not.*

Before I proceed to the ſecond grand Characteriſtick, let me ſuggeſt ſome few inferences hence.

1. That the beſt way to meaſure our attainments, is to meaſure our love to God and Man; he that loves much has profited much; he that continues in hatred, is inclinable to variance, ſtrife, wrath, and whatever is the product of that firſt enmity that befell us upon our falling off from God, is ſo far unrecovered of the fall.

2. That the groſſeſt ſins & the beſt duties

duties are thoſe which are moſt contrary to, or agreeable with Love; of ſins, ſuch are covetouſneſs, oppreſſion (moſt eſpecially) perſecution, voluntary ſcandal (which is Soul-murder) raſh cenſures, or any hard uſage of our Brethren, murmuring againſt God, unconcernment in the things of God, his Cauſe, People, Glory, all which intimate a diſreſpect to him. And of Duties, ſuch as are fulleſt of gentleneſs, ſweetneſs, goodneſs, tenderneſs, that manifeſt bowels and affections towards God and Man; Theſe are the duties of all duties that God and Chriſt put the higheſt value upon; it is Love that ſweetens all ſervices, it inhances a cup of cold Water above a glaſs of Wine; and if you obſerve it in the great day, as is repreſented in *Mat.* 25. 35, 40. Chriſt reckons up nothing in all his Peoples lives, but ſome few of their kindneſſes, and

theſe

theſe he requites with everlaſting Love and Glory, that whatever we think of our ſelves in this preſent day, there is little good amongſt us, becauſe little love, and the way to amend us is to reconcile us; and indeed one would think it eaſie work amongſt Chriſtians, becauſe they cannot love their Duty, but they muſt love one another; if we cannot make men our Friends, we have a greater opportunity of conforming unto the goodneſs of God, by loving them as enemies, and this is the great perfection of Love commended *Mat.* 5. *laſt.* And let this prepare us to receive the Apoſtles advice. *Epheſ.* 4. 31, 32. *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking be put away from you with all malice, and be kind one towards another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſts ſake hath forgiven you.*

you. The whole Law is brought to one word, Love; ſhall we not have regard to this one word of God? at your perils take or leave, God is come to a word, your Love, or nothing; *Peter loveſt thou me? feed my ſheep*, that is, love thy Brethren too, be not wanting to them in what I have intruſted thee with. And this is Love for every one of us, according as we have received readily to aſſiſt our Brethren; and in withholding in time of need, we may keep our Purſes full, but make our hearts void of the love of God or man, 1 *Joh.* 3. 17.

2. The ſecond grand note of a Perfect Man is ſelf-denial, that is, a readineſs of mind to part with any thing, to indure all things, in compliance with the will of God, a cleaving to the Lord with full purpoſe of heart without any reſerve; that tho all Men forſake him, or forſake us for his

his ſake, we will abide by him, whatever he impoſes, we will ſubmit to it, whatever he orders we will go through it; whatever becomes of us or of any thing of ours, we will never leave God, let our goods be ſpoiled, our good names beſpattered, our bodies impriſoned, tortured, murdered, all is a caſe, God is our God ſtill, his ways are our walk, his Word is our rule, we know whom we have truſted, and ſtill dare commit to him the keeping of our Souls in well-doing. This is to be a Perfect Man, a man for all Weathers, for all Purpoſes, for all ſervices; he is but half a Man, that is not for all Gods Works. The Youngſter in the Goſpel ſeemed a fine Fellow, and where can he be matched among all the Youth of the Country! he was no Murderer, no Adulterer, no Thief, no falſe Witneſs, one that honoured his Parents, loved his Neighbours, a

man

man exerciſed from his youth in all the common Duties of the Law; and yet our Saviour tells him, *Mat.* 19. 21. that one thing was yet lacking, and if he would be Perfect he muſt ſell all he had, and give it to the Poor, and take up his croſs and follow him: This was that would ſhew him a Man; every young Stripling might do the reſt; It is nothing to ſerve God, while we can ſerve our ſelves too, every one almoſt would be a Chriſtian, was it not for ſome one thing; *Naaman*, if he might bow in the houſe of *Rimmon*, and keep in favour with his King; *Herod*, if he may be ſpared in the matter of *Herodias*. Some will be Religious till their Eſtates, Honors, Liberties, Lives come in danger, but then they muſt be excuſed. Alas theſe things that you except are the only things that God cares for; withhold them and with-hold all. When

God

God ſaw *Abraham* even doting upon *Iſaack*, nothing will ſatisfie him but *Iſaack* for a Sacrifice. *Gen.* 22. 2. *Take now thine* only *Son Iſaack whom thou loveſt, and offer him for a Burnt-offering*; when *Abraham* aſſents to give him God, God gives him back again with this teſtimony, *v.* 12. *now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not with-held thy Son, thine only Son*, and ſo further *v.* 15, 16, 17, 18. It is never evident that we love or fear God as we ought, till we deſpiſe all things upon his account; & therefore there are few but God does ſome time in their lives put upon this tryal; and as they abide it, ſo he accounts of them for ever. God and Chriſt take it in great ſcorn that any thing ſhould be preferred before them. *Mat.* 10. 37, 39. *He that loveth father or mother, life or goods more than me, is not worthy of me*, &c. And therefore is that proteſt of the

Apoſtle in behalf of himſelf and brethren. *Rom.* 8. 35, 37. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famin, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword? Nay in all theſe things we are more than Conquerours through him that loved us.*

Take theſe ſhort notes upon this Conſideration.

1. That the Worlds perfect Fools, are Gods perfect Men; nothing ſeems ſo ridiculous to the World as the ſubmiſſion of Gods People to ſufferings, and their walking in ways that will certainly expoſe them to inconveniences and troubles; alas they ſee not Chriſt going before them, God calling them, Conſcience ingaging them, Angels applauding them, the Reward encouraging them; they know not that it becomes them, as it did their Captain to be made *perfect through ſufferings*, Heb. 2. 10. and that

that *through many tribulations they muſt enter* into Glory; as they quit themſelves in their conflicts, they looſe or receive their Crown.

2. That looſing is many times a very ſaving courſe, it's Chriſts own expreſſion, *he that looſes his life for my ſake ſhall find it*, and ſo of all things elſe with an hundred-fold advantage.

Be not ſtumbled that ſelf-denial is in the way to Perfection, ſince perfection is the way to Happineſs; be rather reconciled to ſelf-denial, than prejudiced againſt Perfection; if ſufferings and death perfect us, they are deſirable of us; and not to be ſo dreaded by us. And let me ſay it, it is the greateſt mercy of our lives, that God has put ſo high a value on our deaths. Bleſſed be God that ſelfdenial is a duty that God ſtands ſo much upon, and makes ſuch account of; it is the moſt compendious way to heaven ima-

ginable, by it ſome have made but one or two ſteps of their Chriſtian Race; one drop of bloud makes a greater advance towards our Victory over the World, than a great quantity of ſweating; dying once for God is equivalent with living many years to God: in ſuch a caſe conquer but one temptation, and you ſhall have no more conflict with temptations. It is not only the honour of a Chriſtian to ſeal the certainty of his love to God in a way of ſufferings, as he intimates *Acts* 5. 41. (*rejoycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his ſake*, that they were honoured to be diſhonoured) but it is their great priviledge to have their part of Service lie this way, *Phil.* 1. 29. *to you it is given* ἐχαρίσθη as a grace and favour, *not only to believe, but to ſuffer for his ſake*, and that not only our ſufferings advance our wages in Heaven, but our

pace

pace to it, and give us a ſpeedier entrance, as well as provide a better reception.

Here then is the *Pſalmiſts* Perfect Man. He is one that having preferred God in his judgment to all things, and through hopes of enjoying him (which ſuppoſes Faith in Chriſt) lets out all his affections after him, is wonderfully taken with him, and all that bares his image, ſtudious of pleaſing him and conforming to him, eſpecially in that he moſt admires in him, his Love and Goodneſs; and is ſo confirmed in his choice of God for his Portion, that he counteth all things a moderate price, a reaſonable exchange for him.

Many failings may happen, but this is the general frame of his heart unto which he recovers himſelf upon recollection; his Soul upon the bent is much at *Jobs* pitch, *Job* 27.6,

7. *my Righteouſneſs* (taking it for ſanctification) *I hold faſt, and will not let it go; my heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live; let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riſeth up againſt me as the ungodly*; he thinks it miſery enough to be a Sinner, he can ſcarce wiſh his enemy ſo ill.

So much for the firſt Queſtion.

2. Why is he peculiarly held in hand with peace? *The end of that Man is Peace,*

1. It may be mentioned as the moſt unlikely and unlooked for thing, the more to amaze the World and chear them, they know little but trouble here, therefore God aſſures them of reſt and peace hereafter; a ſutable and acceptable word to a Saint militant, for this reaſon it is brought in *Joh.* 16. 33. 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 6, 7. *Heb.* 4. 9. This Word is worth a world to many a Soul.

2. As being a ſenſible Good which every

every one ſeeks for himſelf, however delighted he is to trouble others; and indeed all the joſtling and contending in the World, is to remove or incapacite thoſe that might indanger its diſturbance; this drew the ſword againſt Chriſt. *John* 11. 48. 50.

And the ſame jealouſie has given occaſion to all the Wars and Perſecutions that ever were, and is indeed the only tolerable pretence for them, and gives them ſomething of the nature of ſelf defence, as *Exod.* 1.9, 10. though that good courſe of charity and equity is herein overſeen, do as you would be done by. Peace then being a ſenſible good, and ſo generally eſteemed; wicked men may eaſily obſerve the happineſs of it, and good Men the eaſier lay hold upon it; it is a great advantange for Faith to apprehend what it reaches after, every one in their condition can ſee

Peace as a very acceptable thing.

3. As being a very comprehenſive Good, imploying according to the general ſenſe of the *Jews* all good; and the common teſtimony of Gods pleaſure or diſpleaſure, was in thoſe days eſpecially by Peace or War. I ſhall reduce the Good that is moſt naturally implied in it to theſe heads, the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs, its fruit grows in cluſters.

1. It implies their victory over the wicked, with whom they can hope for peace upon no other terms but conqueſt; and therefore in the ſame Verſe that Chriſt tells his People of Peace, he tells them he has *overcome the world*, *Joh.* 16. 33. whence you ſee alſo in this Pſ. their confuſion ſo often ſet againſt the peace of the Righteous. The peace of good Men is therefore a moſt dreadfull thing to the wicked, it ſhall be built upon their ru-

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in and deſtruction; but a moſt joyous and glorious thing to themſelves, as being the end of their troubles, the fruit of their conflicts, the crown of their conqueſt. Their peace coming upon the perfect vanquiſhing of their enemies, has this advantage in it, that hereby they are eternally ſecured from all violence and moleſtation, which gives them opportunity to enjoy what they otherwiſe have, and the eternity of it.

2. It implies plenty, which only will allay thoſe contentious paſſions that incline and incite to war. Was there not a ſufficiency in Heaven for every Soul, there would be place for diſcontent, murmurings, envyings, and ſo a tendency and temptation to change, with which a firm Peace is inconſiſtent. *Jam.* 4. 1, 2. Where the commons are ſhort it is hard keeping from ſcrambling; it is the inſufficiency of the earth to make all of

of us rich and noble, that ſets us together by the ears; ſome muſt be plucked down that others may be ſet up; Heavens perfect Peace is therefore an argument of its abſolute fulneſs.

3. It implies impunity; peace with God is the beginning of this peace, which they have many times here as the pledge & earneſt of what is behind, and this beginning of peace our Saviour thought ſufficient to ſwallow up all outward troubles. *Joh.* 14.27. And of the ſame mind was the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 4. 7. *And the Peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus*; as if he had ſaid, you have Peace with God, oh that is a great and a glorious thing, I cannot tell how to ſet it out; it paſſes my capicity, and that of any elſe too, to tell you what it has in it, but this I am ſure, it is ſufficient to keep

keep all elſe in peace; they can eſteem this Peace that have ſeen God in a warlike ſtate againſt them.

4. It implies reſt and tranquillity; and all the contentions of the Fleſh and Spirit will be compoſed, all our combats with the World and the Devil will be ended, all our fears will be ſwallowed up, thoſe we had of God by perfect Love, and thoſe we had of the Devil by joy and contempt; the Soul looks upon him, and all his confederates with ſcorn, as he *Rom.* 8. 37. over *all theſe things we are more than Conquerors.*

In a word, Peace here is comprehenſive of all things, excluſive of nothing that may make for their eternal happineſs. But I take it intimated in this notion with ſome reflection upon the wicked, intimating there is a time coming when they ſhal ceaſe to trouble their Righteous Neighbours, and their own troubles & torments ſhall begin; *the end of that man*

man is Peace, implies not only that he ſhall attain to it, but that all others ſhall fall ſhort of it, as the next Verſe intimates, *but the tranſgreſſors ſhall be deſtroyed together, the end of the wicked ſhall be cut off*, reliquie, that little remainder of good he enjoyed ſhall be took from him, to his utter ſpoiling; the end may intimate that we ought to wait for the fulfilling this Promiſe.

3. What does the *Pſalmiſt* drive at, in bidding us to mark and obſerve the Perfect man?

1. He would take off our eyes from beholding the glittering outſide of wicked Men, which was apt to dazle and offend them, ſtirring to envy or emulation.

2. He would have us mark his Perfect Man, that is, fix our eye upon him, not glance at his outſide, which is mean and deſpicable, not conſider his preſent condition in this World, which may be offenſive and

diſcouraging, for which reaſon the Church deſires us, *Cant.* 1. 6. that we would not look upon her, ſhe was in her morning dreſs, her working-day Cloaths; but we ſhould look to what good Men will be, and ſo the world affords not a more glorious ſight than a good Man; this is looking upon them as objects of Admiration.

3. Mark them as ſubjects of Imitation; theſe are your men are like to come to ſomething; others are meer Swaggerers; if you will follow example, here be ſome worthy of you; in ſuch a ſenſe the Apoſtle adviſes to a like obſervance. *Heb.* 13. 7. *whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the end of their Converſation*; they are gone to Heaven, theſe will be at peace, mark theſe Men, put your ſelves in their Garb if you can, if you would paſs for ſubſtantial Men indeed; others are meer vapours, in a

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ſhort time they will come to nothing at all. Obſerve hence.

1. That a good Man is not ſo contemptible and inconſiderable as he ſeems to be; People might vouchſafe to look upon him if they knew all, his caſe is not altogether as it appears to common view. 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9, 10.

I need not ſpeak how they are undervalued by all ſorts of Men, ſome through pitty, ſome through ſcorn, but all agree that they are a fooliſh, ſoft, unhappy generation of Men, that have caſt away and undone themſelves, and this is the beſt character they obtain from their more ingenuous Spectators. They are generally eſteemed as the very refuſe and off-ſcouring of the World, the baſeſt and unworthieſt of Men; ſome blare out their tongues, and belch forth blaſphemies againſt them, ſome gnaſh their teeth and

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ſmite their hands, and grudge to ſee them above ground, the Countries, and places, and families where they live, grow ſick of them, and ſpew them out with loathing: what does the *Pſalmiſt* mean to bid us look upon theſe Men? has he a mind to turn our ſtomachs? we expected he would have ſhewed us his Court, and he brings us to an Hoſpital, we thought to have been pointed to ſome brave Prince, he ſhews us a poor ſneaking Saint; well Sirs, be not ſo ſoon offended, it was the moſt glorious ſight in all *Davids* Kingdom; he tells us of other ſights, but with little ſatisfaction. *V.* 35, 36. The wicked however great, he could look through them, and ſee rags, and dirt, and ruine under the ſilken veil that covered them; he makes them to be meer vanity, they would not endure the view, *he paſſed away, and lo he was not, I ſought him but he could not be found.* Good

Good Men are the only men of remark; they are ſubjects for God and Angels to contemplate with delight; their eyes are always upon them, and cannot keep from them, where two or three of them are together he makes a fourth, though it be in a fiery furnace. They cannot have a Conventicle (as I may ſo ſay) in the meaneſt, obſcureſt place of the Town, but he will be at it, liſtening and taking notes, and rejoycing over them, and reſolving what he will do for them, as in that remarkable place, *Mal.* 3. 16, 17. You do not find him giving ſuch heed or countenance to the bawdy ſongs, and naſty ribbaldry of greater Perſons in an Alehouſe or Tavern, whoſe meeting ſeems more tolerable, and their converſation more glorious to Sots and ſenſual Idiots.

The truth on't is, there is in all capacities no man to the good Man, I might

might ſay, no man but the good Man, therefore *mark* him. When *Satan* told God he had been wandering to and fro in the earth, God ſtrait interrupts him, haſt thou conſidered my ſervant *Job*? intimating that he was the mirrour of the viſible Creation, and that he had ſeen nothing if he had not ſeen him. *Job* 1. 8.

The uſe of this may be 1. To take off our contempt and ſcorn at good Men, and to let theſe deſpiſers know they are never a whit behind them, but will paſs among their Betters with as good eſteem, as the richeſt, and nobleſt, and proudeſt, and ſtouteſt of them all; view them in themſelves, in their Relations, in their States and conditions.

2. To ſtop the rage, and enmity, and oppoſition of the World againſt them; they have great Abetters. I ſhould chooſe with a thouſand Men to fight the great *Turks* Army, rather than

with all the World to engage againſt the ſmalleſt number of Gods People. It is certain ruine to the greateſt Monarch under the Sun to lift up his Standard againſt them; Men know not who they provoke, when they ſtir up Gods People but to pray againſt them. See how Chriſt deſcribes them collectively as in one Perſon. *Cant.* 6. 10. *Who is ſhe that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an army with Banners?* Who is it, it is the Spouſe of Chriſt? Her Sex ſpeaks weakneſs, but her relation brings a ſtrength that will confound all Powers that ſhall oppoſe her.

3. To provoke us all to a more narrow obſervance & greater eſteem of good Men. Their perſons, their ways deſerve the wall of us all and all our inventions, & you obſerve a ſpirit in them never to yield it to any; it is not ſtoutneſs neither, but duty; the Spouſe herein maintains the right of her

her Husband, who is Lord over all; ſhe is walking in his hand when ſhe is ſo rudely joſtled, and commanded to give way by the uncivil World. For ſhame put not that Woman from the wall, turn her not out of the way, demand it of her Husband, bid Chriſt give way; his Spouſe muſt leave him, if ſhe leaves the way he leads her in, and then thanks to ſelf if miſchief befalls her, as *Jer.* 2. 17. *haſt thou not procured this unto thy ſelf in that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?* Oh that I could intreat the World to be civil; the Virgin-daughter of *Zion* is betrothed, and is not free to follow every Lover. She muſt be ſhie if ſhe would be chaſt; ſhe muſt take heed of walking, or being familiar with thoſe Shepherds that ſeem to be Chriſts Companions, & whoſe Folds are near, in the ſame field with his, as is repreſented *Cant* 1.7. *Tell me O thou whom my Soul loveth where thou*

feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy Flock to reſt at noon; for why ſhould I be one that turneth aſide by the flocks of thy Companions. There are many wanton Shepherds that feed very near Chriſt, and ſeem to have ſome great familiarity with him, of whom the Church and People of God are in moſt danger to be defiled, and have therefore moſt reaſon to beware of; and if they walk ſhyly, let not the others pull them in rudely, leſt they ſtir up the jealouſie of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to work a vengeance that need not be repeated.

4. If they are ſo conſiderable, let it mind them a little more to keep their ſtate. Now I ſhall ſuggeſt to them two or three things altogether unworthy of their rank.

1. To ſee them eagerly purſuing this worlds goods; it is as if you ſhould ſee a Prince at plow, or a Nobleman raking in the channel. It diſparages their Birth, calling, eſtate, hopes.

2. To

2. To ſee them exceſſively grieving under this Worlds evils, one would think them of this World by their concern for it, a greater Spirit is expected in perſons of their Grandeur.

3. To ſee them forward in compliance with this worlds fopperies, ſtooping to things below them, and ſubmitting their very ſpirits to the will and wiſdom of vain men, which God has not ſubjected to Angels. *Heb.* 2. 5. The Apoſtle thought it a ſordid thing and inconſiſtent with the priviledges we pretended to. *Gal.* 4. 9. *Col.* 2. 20. They are places worth ſtudying, but ſomething dangerous opening.

2*d*. Obſervation, and that will take in the general deſign of the Text.

That by a due obſervance of Gods carriage towards his People, we might be reconciled both to him and them, and underſtand their preeminence above all the men of the world.

He is not, need not be aſhamed to be called their God, he quits the Relation he ſtands in to them.

In the handling this I ſhall firſt premiſe this one thing.

1. That the moſt ſingular indearments of God unto his People, are out of common view.

2. Wherein may a wiſe Obſerver underſtand Gods ſingular Grace in his diſpenſations towards his People, ſo as to glorifie God in their behalf?

3. Whence is it Men generally do not obſerve this kindneſs of God towards his People?

And then I ſhall ſubjoyn ſome uſefull reflections upon the whole.

1. In a way of premiſe; That the moſt ſingular indearments of God unto his People are of common view. To prevent Atheiſtical cavils of vain Men, that deſpiſe the cloſe enjoyments of Saints as feigned and fanatical, becauſe unexperienced by themſelves, I ſhall take a greater compaſs

compaſs in the handling this particular than otherwiſe would be needfull.

I ſhall therefore firſt proceed in a way of expoſtulation, and then in a way of Probation.

1. In a way of Expoſtulation with theſe great Pretenders to reaſon, that mock at the ſimplicity of much wiſer than Men themſelves.

1. Why ſhould it be incredible, that other men ſhould experience what you are altogether inſenſible of? are none ſick becauſe you are well? are none rich becauſe you are poor? are there no ſuch things as Gout, Stone and Cholick, becauſe you never felt their pains? bring forth your ſtrong reaſonings, who made you the meaſure of Mankind in things purely accidental to it? If all men are as you are, why pretend you to be wiſer than they? whence are your ſingular notions, wherein you prefer your ſelves to other Men?

if you may differ from others, why may not others differ from you? if you have not all mens infirmities, why ſhould you think you have all mens excellencies? fond Man, what wilt thou make of thy ſelf? what a monſter will pride and vanity make a Man? His next concluſion in this way of arguing, will be to think God altogether like himſelf, as *Pſal.* 50. 21. Such follies need not confutation but reproof, and that God has undertaken in the latter end of that *Verſe* and *Pſalm.*

2. What abſurdity that Perſons of different qualifications ſhould have different communications? is it not the moſt common of all natural experiments? does not clay harden, and wax melt before the ſame fire? does not a new light make a new repreſentation of the ſame object? is not every thing received according to the meaſure, capacity and preparation of the Recipient? is water poured

poured into a veſſel that is ſtopped, as into one that is open? does a dead child draw the breaſt, and taſt the ſweetneſs of its mothers milk, as doth the living? Tell me then, ſince like participations do naturally depend upon like preparations and diſpoſitions, whence is it and what is the ground of your conceit? that when in every thing you are unlike good Men, you ſhould be like them in their comforts? you do not as they do, you are not where they are; and why muſt you needs receive as they receive? what ſuſpicion can there be that Drinking ſhould have the ſame iſſue as Praying, that trifling ſhould have the ſame reward as working? that the deſpiſers of God ſhould be reſpected as thoſe that prize and love him? If this ſuppoſition did become Men, ſuch carriage would not become God, how fooliſh are their notions, how unreaſonable their expectations, that nature muſt become

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irregular, and God irrational to anſwer them.

3. Why may not they have comforts that you know not of, as well as you have, which they are unacquainted with? They can as little imagin that Drinking, ſwearing, carding, Dicing, &c. ſhould bring you in comfort, as you can conceive how Praying, Hearing, Believing ſhould refreſh them; and yet they cannot but think you have your pleaſure (ſuch as it is) in thoſe things that are their grief to behold, elſe ſo much precious time would not be ſpent in them, your Immortal Souls would not be hazarded for them, Heaven and Happineſs might ſome way compare with them, which we ſee deſpiſed in compariſon of them; Is it not as credible that the company of Gods People, the Communion of God, the ordinances and other extraordinary vouchſafements may as much chear and refreſh a heart

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that looks for, and has a delight in ſuch things? or is not God ſo good, or ſo able to comfort his Dependants, as the Devil his? Believe it, if upon no other argument, yet upon this, that Gods ſecret Preſence is enough to comfort his People, becauſe it is enough to mar all your comforts, yea, God makes them merry ſometimes by ſpoiling your mirth, *Pſal*, 107. 40, 41. *He poureth contempt upon Princes, and cauſeth them to wander in the wilderneſs; the Righteous ſhall ſee it and rejoyce, and all iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth.*

But to leave Expoſtulation and come to Probation,

That the moſt ſingular endearments of God unto his People, are out of common view, the great Careſſes of kindneſs God paſſes upon them are in his Banqueting-houſe, in his Garden, in thoſe private walks, whether he allures his beloved ones,

and

and opens his heart to them. The world ſees not thoſe ſmiles and glances he caſts upon them, the kiſſes wherewith he ſeals his eternal Love to them, the preparations that God has made for them, as he ſpeaks. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10. *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of Man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.* God carries himſelf outwardly much alike to all the Sons of Men, as it were to avoid exception, and that they may not quarrel one with another, but he ſlips many a piece of Gold ſecretly into his Darlings hands, that the reſt of the world took no notice of. As the recovery of *Hezekiah* ſeemed but a common favour, but the good Man viewing it well, ſees a great deal more in it; it was not his life but Gods Love that he takes notice of. *Iſa.* 38. 17. *Thou haſt in love to my Soul delivered*

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it from the pit of corruption, thou haſt put all my ſins behind thy back. His recovery was but the brown Paper that God wrapt thoſe more pretious Mercies in, and yet that was all appeared. Now thoſe joys of Gods Children which ſtrangers intermeddle not with, which ſweetens their condition, and makes it ſo ſupereminent to that of other Men, are derived to them from a double ſpring.

1. From the ſecret out-flowings of Gods Heart to them, I mean not in the general Letter of the Scripture (though I always ſuppoſe according to it) for ſo Gods heart is always equally open to all Obſervers; his general purpoſes towards good and bad lie in clear view, without any great influence or impreſſion upon either. But I underſtand the particular manifeſtation of his Love in an applicatory way to individual Souls, whereby God tells them as it were by

by word of mouth that he loves them, that he has pardoned all their ſins to them, that he is preparing Heaven for them, and as conſtant pledges of this eternal Love, is ſtill giving out ſupports of his Spirit, ſupplies of his Grace, views of his Glory, ſmiles of his Countenance, good words and gracious looks, which pleaſe and delight the Soul more than the income and increaſe of all things, as he tells us, *Pſal.* 4. 6, 7, 8. *lift up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou haſt put gladneſs into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increaſed.*

Wicked men live without God in the World; they enjoy not him in any enjoyments; but good Men can enjoy nothing without him; their outward comforts have no reliſh or ſavour without inward Communications; they thirſt and hunger, and languiſh away in the fulneſs of all things,

things, if God be not preſent with them. How ſadly did poor *Heman* complain, *Pſal.* 88. what is the matter, did *David* frown upon him, was he caſhiered the Court? He opens his own ſore. *V.* 14, 15. *Lord why caſteſt thou off my Soul? why hideſt thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die, while I ſuffer thy terrors I am diſtracted.* And this is a great argument of the exceeding comfort and complacence Gods preſence affords them, becauſe his withdrawing cauſes ſuch gripings, convulſions, diſtractions, that the Soul can ſcarce ſubſiſt under them; whereas if all things elſe are withdrawn, and God continues, they are ſcarce miſſed, he ſupplies their room, *Pſal.* 73.26. *My heart faileth, and my ſtrength faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever,* and ſo *Hab.* 3. 17, 18, 19. *Although the figtree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour*

of

of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls, yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation, the Lord is my ſtrength, &c. *To the chief ſinger on my ſtringed inſtruments*; he can ſing and dance for all this, ſongs he thought fitter than ſighs in ſuch a caſe.

2. As there are unſpeakable joys and comforts infuſed into the Souls of juſt men, by the out-flowings of Gods heart to them; ſo there is no ſmall pleaſure and titillation in the anſwer and returns of their hearts to God in a way of Faith, Hope, Love, Obedience.

1. In a way of Faith and hope, which ſtill entertain the Soul with fore-taſts of the glory to come, whereby it anticipates its future happineſs; they ſhew the Soul that it is dead with Chriſt, riſen again and ſet down in heavenly places with him;

him; they bring us into the company of Chriſt in one word. *Rom.* 10. 6,7,8. Shew us the Happineſs of Heaven in another; in the failure of preſent things they ſupply us with future; when this tabernacle decays, they take a houſe for us; when this life expires they lay hold on eternal Life. The buſineſs of Faith is to lie a Factor in Heaven for us, and glorious are the Returns he makes to us. 1 *Pet.* 1. 8, 9. *In whom, though now we ſee him not, yet Believing we rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory; Receiving the end of your Faith, even the ſalvation of your Souls.* Nothing has ſuch a reach and capacity as Faith; if there be any thing to be had in Heaven or Earth, it is its own; nay, wherever you can find bloſſoms, Faith will find fruit; all things are ready for Faiths eating, it matters not time, it can give preſence to any thing.

2. In a way of love. They have

the pleaſure of loving God, and this affords them many pretty, pretious delights, it joyes them to ſee how great, and how good, and how wiſe their Beloved is, what ſtrange and wonderfull things he does; Love makes us concerned for God, and our concern gives us a ſhare in all the excellencies he has, and in all the glory he gets, that ſo long as it goes well with God, it cannot be ill with thoſe that wiſh him well. I am in a low condition, my honour is laid in the duſt, but my God is exalted on high, his Throne and Dominion is for everlaſting, or as he, *Heb.* 2. 8, 9. *We ſee not all things put under him*, that is, under Mankind; *but we ſee Jeſus crowned with glory and honour.* This ſuffices, if we love him as our ſelves, what's done to him is done to our ſelves; and by this rule, ſo much glory as God and Chriſt have in the World, ſo much comfort, ſuch variety of delight may true Lovers have;

have; beſides that our love is ſtill drawing out Gods love, whereby our Communion is much ſweetened, and God who is lovelineſs it ſelf, grows every day more lovely to the Soul by his kindneſs and familiarity with it; as the Spouſe confeſſes, *Cant.* 1. 3. *Thy love is better than wine, becauſe of the ſavour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured out, therefore do the Virgins love thee*; there is a ſweetneſs in Chriſts ſociety, whereby not only his Perſon, but very Name inamours.

3. In a way of obedience; it is great eaſe and delight to a gracious heart that is ſenſible of its ingagements to God, to be doing any thing that may ſavour of gratitude to him, that may be any thing worthy of him, or likely to find acceptance with him; and the pleaſure of ſo doing may ariſe hence; 1. as it gives eaſe to the Soul oppreſſed with benefits, which are great burdens till ſome

way requited, at leaſt gratefully acknowledged; 2. as giving ſome ſatisfaction to Conſcience that is otherwiſe grinning and chiding. 3. As it ſomething relieves us from the grief and ſhame of a generally unfruitfull converſation; but moſt eſpecially as it gives delight unto Jeſus Chriſt, and is ordinarily an effectual invitation to him to come unto that Soul, and manifeſt himſelf more graciouſly to it; whence was that earneſtneſs of the Church by any means, that her vertues and graces might be drawn forth, *Cant.* 4. 16. *Awake O North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out*; (what for?) *let my Beloved come into his garden and eat his pleaſant fruits.* Well did this bring Chriſt? Yes, and he brought his coſt with him too, in the very next Verſe that begins the 5*th* Chap. *I am come into my garden, my Siſter, my Spouſe, I have gathered*

my

my myrrh with my ſpices, I have eaten my hony-comb with my hony, I have drunk my wine with my milk; how well does Chriſt expreſs himſelf entertained with the poor proviſions of his People; what ſays he further? he ſpreads the table afreſh, brings out his own ſtore, bids them fall on, and gives them a very hearty welcom; *Eat O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

And indeed this is Chriſts general manner, he is never invited to a collation, but he brings a diſh or too with him worth all the feaſt, ſo *Rev. 3. 2. Behold I ſtand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.* And this is the great reaſon, the Saints are ſo glad they have any thing to entertain Chriſt with, becauſe of the Banquet that ſo ſurely comes after it.

Well then, to ſum up this Head, it

cannot be denied but that good men have their greateſt treaſure, their moſt ſolid pleaſures out of the worlds view

The particular uſe of it is,

That whenever their outward ſtate diſcourages us, we remember that their riches are within; and while we ſee them upon duty, let us never think them in miſery; but ſuppoſe it is with them as with the Apoſtles and Saints of old, of whom *Paul* ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *As unknown, and yet well known, as dying and behold we live, as chaſtened and not killed, as ſorrowfull and yet always rejoycing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet poſſeſſing all things*; he cannot be ſpoiled that has God ſure to him.

2*d.* General.

2. Wherein may a wiſe Obſerver underſtand Gods ſingular Grace in his diſpenſations towards his People, ſo as to glorifie God on their behalf?

1. By obſerving Gods ſingular appearance

pearance and interpoſal in all their affairs.

What the wicked have we can generally aſcribe to ordinary means; how came this man to his wealth and honour? by flattery, by treachery, by bribery, perjury, or at beſt, induſtry; any Man of reaſon will ſay he paid dear enough for them, he cannot brag a favour in that he bought, his great ingagement to God is that he would permit the bargain, an ordinary courteſie where ſuch ſatisfaction is ſecured to him, the poor man is bound body and Soul for it; if he return it not upon Gods call with uſury, he is undone for ever, it will not ſuffice to leave their eſtates, and honour, and power behind them, but they muſt ſome way have improved them for Gods intereſt, or wo is them that ever they had them, you may ſee their reckoning, *Mat.* 25. 28, 30. *Take the talent from him*, ſpoil him, ſtrip him of all he has, no more

riches, no more pleaſure, no more plenty, and power, and honour; and in this naked and forlorn condition ſhall he find no pitty! out with him ſays God, I will not endure him in my ſight, an unprofitable ſervant, *caſt him into outer darkneſs*, let him ſee his folly, and ſo he will to purpoſe; *there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* God ſcarce appears at all in the beſtowing good things upon them, but he appears with a witneſs, with a vengeance to require them at their hand. When as on the contrary, what good Men have, comes more immediately and viſibly out of Gods hand, when they are ſeeking and looking after ſomething elſe, as that expreſſion intimates, *Mat.* 6. 33. *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added to you, take* you no thought for them. Their mercies drop as it were from heaven, and God is more diſcernable in them,

than

than in the common Mercies which the World get generally by ſcrambling, without any particular direction of viſible aſſignment of God.

Now Gods hand, his good Hand is in theſe caſes very diſcernable in their behalf.

1. In the Exaltation at any time, being Perſons that forbear the tricks of inſinuation that others raiſe themſelves by, that live out of the way of Honour and advancement, whom the World is generall ſet againſt, and endeavours to ſuppreſs; for them to emerge at any time, ſhews the ſingular help and aſſiſtance they had from God, as in the caſe of *Joſeph* and *Daniel*, God raiſed them by miracle as it were, in ſpight of all means uſed to ſuppreſs them, and eſpecially in *Daniels* riſe, God appeared ſo eminently, that the great Tyrant thought *Daniel* himſelf a God, *Dan.* 2.46. *King* Nebuchadnezzar *fell upon his face and worſhipped Daniel*,

Daniel, and commanded they ſhould offer an oblation and ſweet odours to him. But when *Daniel* refuſed this honour, it is caſt upon *Daniels* God, he got a great deal of honour by it.

And ſo in the exaltation of Jeſus Chriſt, God would not have him beholding to popular favour, and human decrees for the Soveraignty he intended him, but lets the builders firſt refuſe him, and then makes him Head of the corner, which the *Pſalmiſt* therefore confeſſes that *it was the Lords doing, and was marvellous in his eyes*, Pſal. 118. 22, 23. and ſo he lets the Heathen rage and utterly diſown him, that he may bring him in with a notwithſtanding, as *Pſ.* 2. 6. *Yet have I ſet my King upon my holy hill Zion.*

What is to be done for his own People, God loves to have the doing it himſelf, that he may ingratiate thereby; and in nothing is he more viſible than in the exalting of a good man

man or good intereſt, it is commonly done in deſpight of the world, as again *Pſ.* 107.41. *Yet hath he ſet the poor on high, yet* it is notwithſtanding all the unlikelihoods, all the Piſhes and confidences of the world to the contrary, what is the *Pſalmiſts* obſervation hereupon? *v.*43. *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the kindneſs of the Lord.*

2. In their preſervation at all times; If God did not beſtir himſelf notably, there was no ſubſiſting for them; being a ſmall, weak, deſpiſed and maligned generation of Men, it is a wonder they are not ſwallowed up; they have a ſpecial Protection, or they could never paſs through this world, and what is that? *Iſa.*43.2,3. Gods Preſence with them in fire and water.

Mark the capacity that Chriſt ſends his Diſciples out in, *Luke* 10. 3, 4, *I ſend you forth as lambs among wolves;*

wolves; If a few wolves light upon a whole flock of ſheep, they will make havock upon them, but when a few lambs, the weakeſt and tendereſt of the flock ſhall fall into a whole herd of wolves, diſturbing and moleſting them in their own quarters, what likelihood of their eſcape? truly none if the Shepherd does not follow them cloſe, and beſtir himſelf notably; well what became of them, did they eſcape? Yes, they returned in full tale, but ſore affrighted ſure? you may ſee that *v.*17. *The ſeventy returned with joy ſaying, Lord, even the Devils are ſubject to us through thy name.* Chriſt tells them the reaſon, *v.* 18. *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven*, that is, God caſt him down, would not let him ſtand up againſt you, but put him under your feet; and ſo generally in behalf of his Church and all its choice Members, God is feign to interpoſe, and work miracles for their

their preſervation, as *Rev.* 12. there is a repreſentation of a Woman under the pains of child-birth (by which is meant the Church travailing, and ready to bring forth ſome notable inſtruments of Reformation) how is ſhe attended in this weak condition? a great red dragon ſtands before her to devour her Child aſſoon as it was born, *v.* 4. Alas, the Mother and the tender fruit of her womb, their lives for a half-peny: a danger beyond hope of deliverance, no body with a poor travailing Woman but a dragon; ſuch a Midwife would bring pangs upon the firſt conception; what was the iſſue? Ah poor Child, do you not hear its tender bones cruſhing in the foul fiends mouth, and his Mother wringing her hands and taring her hair, and travailing afreſh with grief and horrour at her bereavement? no ſuch matter, the account we have is, that the Child is took up to God, the Woman

man is hurried into the wilderneſs, the dragon is ingaged by *Michael*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, flies from him, yet again purſues the Woman, God gives her wings, he ſpits his venom at her, the earth drinks it up, the Woman is preſerved for preſent, the Child is reſerved for future, the Devil and his Party rage at their unlucky cheat, Heavens ring at his happy defeat. Sure protection argues providence, ſuch Providence aſſures of love, more than the prevention of ſuch occaſions. And this is the common experience of the People of God, as he ſays, *Pſal.* 129. 1,2,3, 4. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Iſrael ſay, many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed againſt me; the Plowers plowed upon my back, they made long their furrows; the Lord is righteous, he hath cut aſunder the cords of the wicked*; he alludes to the manner of teaming horſes

ſes together at plow by gears or cords that may unite their ſtrength, when they are ſet together at work, God cuts their cords, breaks their combinations, divides and ſcatters them, that their Plow ſtands ſtill, and they run gadding about, and it may be, fall foul upon one another, forgetting the deſign they were at firſt ingaged in.

You may by this Metaphor ſee what is the main work of wicked men, 1. perſecuting is their plowing.

2. That God ſeldom lets them come to ſowing, but defeats and fools them in their Plowing, their very firſt attempt. So far are they from reaping the fruits of their labour, as he intimates *v.*6. 7.

3. And laſtly, no body ſays, God ſpeed the Plow. *v.* 8.

3. The appearance of God is eminent in the mitigation of the evil that betides them; either that is not very heavy, or they are very hearty; he does

does either reſtrain the enemy, or ſuſtain them. Upon each of theſe two members much may be ſaid; ſtill God provides that they are not in extremities, *he ſtays his rough wind in the day of the Eaſt-wind*, Iſa. 27. 8. As to the reſtraint of enemies, Gods methods are various, and very obvious to obſervations; ſometimes he finds them other work; or elſe breaks their teeth, turns their hearts, changes their counſels, confounds their intereſts with that of his People; ſome let or other is ſtill put in the way to break their fury, and if nothing elſe will ſtop, but the *enemy comes in like a flood, the ſpirit of the Lord ſhall lift up a ſtandard againſt him*, as *Iſa.* 59. 19. God will object himſelf and oppoſe them in all their ways, making their counſels fooliſh, their agents falſe, diſcountenancing, diſcouraging, defeating them in all they undertake, which are the reproofs and rebukes that *David* ſays he

he gave Kings for their ſake, 1 *Chr.* 16.21. or if he is pleaſed to lay heavy burdens, and bring great calamities upon them, he ſpirits them accordingly, that we may generally ſee that as their outward troubles abound, their inward conſolations do much more abound, which the Apoſtle makes an argument of Gods faithfulneſs, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *God is faithfull, who will with the temptation make alſo a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

4. He appears on their behalf eminently in a way of vengeance, ſometimes wreſting his People out of their enemies hands to their utter breaking and confuſion, *Iſa.* 45. 26. *I will feed them that oppreſs thee with their own fleſh, and they ſhall be drunken with their own blood*, &c. Thus it fared with old *Babylon*; and ſometimes he ſuffered them to drink of his Peoples blood, but there is a bitter draught behind, which God ordi-

narily gives them in this world, insomuch that our Church-Writers which have given account of the perſecution of Saints, have generally furniſhed an oppoſite Column with the puniſhment of their Perſecutors; but where there needs example for illuſtration, there needs much time and patience in their recital, and more than I ſhall think fit to put my wearied Reader to the expence of in a caſe ſo trite.

And this is the firſt preeminence we may obſerve God gives righteous Men above the wicked, that he intereſts himſelf ſo eſpecially in their affairs.

They are no way of themſelves able to make a Party that may ballance the adverſe part of the world, yet God ſo orders matters, that ſometime they are exalted, in ſome meaſure preſerved, ſtrangely ſupported, or if the worſt comes that they ſuffer under their enemies, moſt certainly

and

and dreadfully avenged; all which particulars are ſuggeſted only for further improvement, &c.

2. Obſerve what is the tendency of Gods Providences towards his People; for the right underſtanding this does help more to the determining how God ſtands affected towards them. If we ſee one cut and ſlaſhed, it matters much to know whether it be for his curing or killing, by his Chirurgeon or his enemy. Now this is certain, that however God carries himſelf in appearance towards his People, his deſign is for their good, hereof they have aſſurance, *Rom.* 8. 28. But how ſhall others obſerve it?

1. If they be not Atheiſts, let them view it in the promiſes, or

2. In the more immediate effects, even of thoſe Providences that ſeem to have leaſt good in them, the troubles and perſecutions they endure, beſides the greater glory that is

wrought out by them, are often ſeen to increaſe Grace, to mortifie luſt, to purifie the life, they are taught obedience by the things they ſuffer, and their obedience brings a peace and ſerenity into the mind, that exceeds all outward injoyments; I do not only fancy theſe things, but the Scripture alſo ſays the ſame, *Heb.* 12.10, 11. and you may obſerve it, and if their preſent fruit be Holyneſs, the next is Happineſs.

It matters not then what they have, but to what purpoſe; riches and honours, and all theſe outward things are only ſo far good, as they are conducing to our eternal Happineſs; if we can fight beſt, run beſt, wreſtle beſt when ſo dyeted, they are beſt for us; though few find advantage in thoſe exerciſes by their burdens) And poverty, diſgrace, perſecution, may be ſo far good, as they lie in the way to a more tranſcending good that will abundantly recompence

pence for them. If theſe be the portion of the Righteous, and are ſanctified as means to ſo glorious an end, and the other be the lot of the wicked, and no ways improved to him, but periſh with him, and are afterwards charged upon him, and become his ruine and condemnation; I think it is eaſily determinable which God was kindeſt to, what advantageth it thouſands, that they are richer, nobler, ſtronger than others, but that they may be verier beaſts, and viler pimps to their own luſts, that they may ſerve Satan more fully, and damn their own Souls more deeply. Better had ſuch men been beggars, cripples, idiots, any thing, nothing, the off-ſcouring of all things, than that they were rich and mighty only to grieve others and undo themſelves, God has dealt well with that man, and only him, that he gives a heart to uſe what he hath well; it is not ſo much what ſtock

you have, as how you manage it; unlucky are that mans mercies that expoſe him to a curſe; happy are his croſſes that prepare him for a Crown.

3. Look to the iſſues of Gods providences on the one and the other; and now I ſhall give the wicked what advantage he can deſire in this preſent world, I ſhall not ſtand with him for any thing; let him be rich, wiſe, noble, mighty, healthfull, chearfull, what he will, let him chooſe his ſeat, which he thinks moſt delightfull, take the Scepter he conceives moſt powerfull, poſſeſs himſelf of all this world can afford, and enjoy it with the leaſt moleſtation, and higheſt ſatisfaction that ever *Epicure* knew in devouring his moſt prepared delicates; conſider him thus tricked up and adorned, I am ſo far from thinking him comparable to the meaneſt and moſt miſerable of Saints that lies ſcraping his skin upon

upon the dunghill, lowſing his boſom in the priſon, bewailing his ſores, and opening his wants at the gates of this great, gilded Gaffer, that I prefer each painted Butterfly before him, and ere a few years paſs, he will be his own burden, the Almighty's Butt, the whole Worlds ſcorn and laughing-ſtock, as you may ſee an inſtance in the *Babylonian* Emperours, *Iſa.* 40. 9--17. Alas what hopes has he in death? what confidence in judgment? what preparations for Eternity? where is all his proſperity, pleaſures and riches? they are no where to be ſeen but in Gods book to be accounted for; you may ſee him in that parable, *Luke* 16. 23, 24. ſweating under his torments, crying out of his wants, looking, and reaching, and begging of that poor beggar he ſaw in Heaven, ah *Lazarus*, one drop of water to cool my ſcorched tongue, all my ſtore is burnt up, and I ſupervive in

devouring flames in everlasting burnings; oh *Abraham* pitty me! shew some mercy to me, a poor destitute, tormented man; he speaks of some he left behind him that were swaggering, and ranting, and rioting at his rate, *v.* 28. he does not envy them their delights, nor desire of their delicates, nor is any way tickled with the remembrance of what he injoyed among them, but intreats their repentance, and trembles at the torments their ways will bring them to. Repentance is one of the severest, soureſt works of a Christian, and yet this experienced wretch, when his considering time was come, prefers the state of a mournfull Penitent before that of a luxurious Prince. In the latter day we shall all consider these things perfectly, I pray God it be not too late first; I wish we could take advantage of his consideration. It may be some of our own jolly Companions are dropt

dropt away in their ſins, and now tormented in hell, looking with the ſame gaſhneſs upon ſome poor Saint that they deſpiſed and perſecuted on earth, whom God hath took into his own boſom, longing for the leaſt of his comforts, and in deſpair ever to ſhare with him, turning away their heads, and fixing their eyes full of pitty, and tears do thus mourn over our laughter, ah my dear friends and companions! you inquire not what becomes of me, you think not what I indure, you dream not how little I am reſpected for that wit, and honour, and gayety that you admired in me; you would not take me for one of your jovial merry Boys if you ſaw me now, drowned in tears, conſumed in flames, howling, and roaring, and gnaſhing my teeth in exceſs of anguiſh; I was as you are, would I had been upon the rack all the while; you will be as I am if you take not heed; and better than you

had

had never been ; eating and drinking, and laughing, and ſlowting, and ſtrutting, and domineering is not living. You have all the world affords at will, and yet you are the only Perſons in the world that I account miſerable, I ſhall ſhortly have your company here, and we ſhall curſe and complain of each other to all eternity, as we have applauded and encouraged one another to vanity and folly before. O that I could ſend this meſſage to you; that I could ſhew my ſelf before you ; but you may ſee my condition in the word, and you may learn your own of Gods faithfull Miniſters, whom we in common ſcoffed at and deſpiſed. Deſpiſe them and periſh, you will have no other intelligence.

There will be a time when you may truſt wicked men to determin this caſe, when they will moſt certainly give the advantage to their righteous Neighbour. Particularly

at

at the approach of death, though but in apprehenſion, then *let us die the death of the Righteous.* Upon a ſummons to judgement, *then give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out,* they ſerve only to walk by day-light. But moſt eſpecially upon the ſentence of condemnation, and all along their ſtate of ſeparation, after once God ſhall have ſhewed them what they have loſt, and what their Brethren that were inferior in the fleſh have obtained, and bid them take their farewell of all Good for everlaſting, with ſome ſuch ſolemn exprobration as that *Acts* 13. 41. *Behold ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh*; then and thenceforward to all eternity, their contempt of others, their flattery of Self will ceaſe, while they ſee others ſhining in glory, joying and exulting in a fulneſs of Bliſs, under the perpetual ſmiles of God, in the cloſeſt imbraces of Chriſt, and themſelves waſting and roaring in hell

hell flames, in deſpair of the leaſt pitty, in aſſurance of the utmoſt miſery; then the perſon of a Saint will be glorious to envy and admiration, when they ſee his Portion, nothing will be thought matter of ſuch wonder, except the grace of God that beſtowed this glory, and their own folly that deſpiſed this Grace.

What think you? may I not yet bring in the advice of the wiſe Man, *Prov.* 23. 17, 18. *Let not thine heart envy ſinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, for ſurely there is an end, and thy expectation ſhall not be cut off.* Envy them? do we need caution againſt it? Alas who would envy condemned Mens fine cloaths? they go to the Hangman ſtraight; they are ſhewed in a fine dreſs to move our pitty, and procure our prayers for them; pitty it is indeed ſuch fine Men ſhould go to Hell, if they would be perſuaded to hear of Heaven; but this is not the bravery

bravery that will bribe Gods juſtice. The *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *Pſal.*73.20. *that God will deſpiſe their image*, intimating (1.) that they are rather ſhews and ſhadows than ſubſtantial Men; and (2.) that God is not moved with ſuch ſhews, they are trifles and meer Gugaws at the beſt; while one is aſleep, he may dream great matters of them, but when he awakes, he deſpiſes them, as there.

So that is clear, that though wicked Men may be firſt ſerved, good Men ſhall be beſt ſerved; mark the end of Good and Bad, take them off the ſtage, view them in the ſtate they ſhall continue in to Eternity, then you will know that the *Righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour.* They are both under diſguiſe now; the Beggar oftentimes acts the Lord, and the Lord the Beggar; you cannot by an ordinary view know which is the beſt Man; they muſt not be judged by what they have

have upon their backs; enquire what ſolid eſtate each hath? what they are born to? what they will be? how they are related? if you can be reſolved this, you will quickly reſolve your ſelf which is the man for your money.

After this obſervation, tell me what are become of all your cavils at Gods juſtice or his goodneſs; is not God juſt? Look into hell, wouldeſt thou deſire God ſhould be ſeverer to the wicked, do not eternal torments ſufficiently take off the felicity of his temporal enjoyments? is not God good? look in Heaven, what could heart deſire more? how can good Men bear more; there is time enough for differencing the one or other ſo long as Eternity is to come.

3*d*. General.

Whence it is that Men do not ordinarily obſerve this kindneſs of God to his People.

To reſolve this briefly,

1. Be-

1. Becauſe they do not know the date of Gods promiſes, nor the preſent ſtate of Gods People; they look all ſhould be preſently fulfilled. Whence are thoſe Queries, *where is the promiſe of his coming? let him haſten his work that we may ſee it*; whereas what the Saints have is by right of inheritance, as frequently in this Pſalm, and for the preſent they are under Age, and the ſeverity of their Tuition may reduce them to the form of ſervants as he ſpeaks, *Gal.* 4. 1, 2. *Now they are the Sons of God, but it does not yet appear* (ſave to the eye of Faith) *what they ſhall be.* 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. It is their right and relation that gives them the main preeminence here, but all cannot read their Indentures, nor blazon their Arms, and therefore it is that they are ſo *unknown*, though well *known*.

2. Becauſe they cannot take notice of Gods Promiſes as they are fulfilled and made good to their Truſtee

and

and Repreſentative, who has all things in his hand that ever God gave his People hopes of, and holds them in their ſteads and names, which ſatisfies Believers as if they were actually inveſted with them, and they reckon that done to themſelves which is done to Chriſt as their Attourney and Receiver; whereupon it is they count themſelves *quickened, raiſed, and ſitting together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus. Eph.* 2. 5, 6. And by a like Faith they ſee all things under their own feet, by beholding Jeſus upon the throne. *Heb.* 2.8,9. And this indeed is the ſpecial myſtery of true juſtifying ſaving Faith, which firſt diſcerns our ſelves in Chriſt, and then appropriates the whole intereſt and riches of Chriſt unto us, that becauſe he lives and reigns, we cannot die or ſink.

3. Through a Prepoſſeſſion of their hearts with a conceit that the preſent

preſent things are the only good things, whereon they will not track Providences beyond their preſent appearances; that they never look towards their tendencies and iſſues we have been ſpeaking of, *Eccles* 3. 11. *He hath made every thing beautifull in its time, alſo he hath ſet the world (ſeculum, pro concupiſcentia ſeculi) in his heart, that no man can find out the work that God doth from the beginning to the end.* Our hearts being wedded to this world, and bent but only upon preſent fruition, cannot be perſuaded to wait till both ends of Gods work come together, and ſo are ſeldom acquainted or affected with it; as *Eſau* piſhes at his Birthright, and prefers a meſs of pottage to it, becauſe it would not ſatisfie his preſent hunger. *Gen.* 25. 32.

4. Through the hatred of good men and the love of vice, they even ſhut their eyes from beholding any good in them, or evil in their own ways,

it being natural to love to take off the ſuſpicion of evil; and to hatred to renounce all ſuppoſitions of good; in both theſe caſes two ſeveral Apoſtles declare the incompetency of ſuch Parties ſo prepoſſeſſed to give right judgement of themſelves or others. 2 *Pet.* 1. 9. 1 *Joh.* 2. 10, 11.

5. Through the malicious ſuggeſtions of Satan, whoſe prime artifice is to detract from God and all goodneſs, as *Gen.* 3. 4, 5.

6. From our general careleſneſs and ſtupidity, our averſneſs and backwardneſs to ſelf-communications, & particularly unto the examination of ſuch things; the *Pſalmiſt* exhorts us to it, *Pſ.* 4. 3, 4. But God ſpeaks as if he almoſt deſpaired of any ſuch thing. *Deut.* 32. 29. *O that they were wiſe, that they would conſider*, &c. Men hardly will be brought ſeriouſly to conſider of ſuch matters; and there is no poſſible reſolution and ſatisfaction without the higheſt rumination,

nation, and ſomething of external communication with God himſelf, the Apoſtle ſpeaks as if he was reſolved by reckoning and accurate weighing things together. *Rom.* 8. 18. 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. 8.

Thus much for the doctrinal part; I come now in the laſt place to thoſe general reflections I promiſed upon the whole, in order to the application and uſe of the point.

1. Is Gods head ſo full of plots, is his heart ſo full of purpoſes of love and good will towards holy and good Men, that he concerns himſelf ſo much for them here, that he provides ſo amply for them hereafter, let this

1. Put us upon examination, whether our hearts are according to the heart of God?

2. Whether it be not worth while to be upright, and walk before God in a perfect way with a perfect heart.

1. Whether our hearts are in this

particular according to the heart of God? whether holy and good Men are alike pretious in our eyes? And here miſtake not good Men for any party of Men, to which for intereſt ſake we may be addicted; nor for pure, civil, and worldly honeſt Men, which we may like for our own ſakes alſo, as being fitteſt for truſt, and all ſort of dealing. But take them for perfect Men, ſuch as we have been deſcribing, that fear and love God above all things, that will pleaſe him whoſoever they diſpleaſe, that live not according to the will of Man, nor the cuſtom of the World, but the Word of God and the example of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Have you ſuch a concern for theſe, as to ſpend your thoughts, & lay out your intereſt in plotting and providing for them? do you count them as the excellent Ones of the Earth in whom is all your delight?

Or on the contrary, are you not engaged

engaged with your whole might againſt them, and their God too? for it would be well conſidered that there is no ſeparating between them.

For diſcovery let us deſcend to Particulars.

1. How do you like them in the Commonwealth (pardon me if I deal plainly, for God will not pardon me if I do otherwiſe) ſome count them the peſts and troublers of all Societies; and their endeavour is to extirpate and exterminate not only their perſons, but very principles, thinking it inconſiſtent with Government, that any power ſhould be owned as awing the Conſcience, or influencing the life beyond the Powers that be, becauſe it may hereby chance that a reſolution of obeying one, may occaſion diſobedince to the other, as *Robert Groſthead* told the *Pope* when he commanded him unlawfull things as he ſuppoſed, *quia mandata veſtra ad peccatum*, &c. *unice, filialiter*,

filialiter, & obedienter, non obedio; contradico, rebello. Mat. Paris. How do you like this Principle of theirs? for it is the main pillar of piety to prefer God above all Kings, and his Will above every ones will. Are you not apt to call it ſtubborneſs, ſtoutneſs and the effects of it, Sedition, Faction, Schiſm? and that upon ſlight examination on your own part, and with ſome indignation that others ſhould ſtand to examin things commanded by Superiors. This is the temper of ſome; but of all ſuch I will make bold to ſay, that whatever their pretences and preſent practices are, they are rooted enemies, not only to holy Men, but Holineſs it ſelf, its Principle and Author, and grudge as it were that God has not confined his Dominion within the Heavens? and if they have any fear of God, it is ſuch a fear that God deſpiſes, which is taught by *the Precepts of Men.*

But

But I hope better things of you, though I thus write, yet I muſt tell you; it is not anothers hopes but your own evidences that muſt quit and abſolve you. Methinks it ſhould not be eaſie to fall into this errour except through innate enmity to God. It is ſtrange to think the worſt Men ſhould be the beſt ſubjects, except in thoſe Societies that are compounded for miſchief. What confidence can there be, where there is no conſcience? It was the obſervation of a wiſe Man that was not over-good himſelf, that *a knave* (a man of no principles) *could be truſted no further than he was a fool*; I ad nor will he, further than we be fools.

2. To come nearer home, how do you like them in your Families? You may judge of this by your choice of them, delight in them, and the encouragement you give to them. Is a wife, a child, a ſervant dearer to you becauſe of their fearing God, and ſtill dearer and dearer, as they grow

ſtricter and ſtricter? or is your delight in vain, wicked, light Perſons? do you take them neareſt to you that God puts furtheſt from him?

And ſo 3. in your friends and acquaintance which lie next your heart. But to be ſhort let me give one general rule for your univerſal trial.

If you are of Gods temper, you will never think the ſtate you live in, the Family you preſide over, the friends you converſe with to be of too high a ſtrain, too holy a frame; but your delight in what you ſee will ſtill ſtir up a deſire of ſeeing more, and an endeavour of advancing higher, till you have brought your ſelf and others to the meaſure of the full ſtature of the new Man in Chriſt; no man that loves Holineſs, can be againſt its height; he has ſome lower deſigns than Heaven that ſets any meaſure to Holineſs in himſelf or others.

2. Whether it be worth while to be

be upright and walk before God in a perfect way, with a perfect heart?

In anſwer hereto, know,

1. That all your other buſineſs is but trifling in compariſon of this; and yet we diſpute not, grudge not any time, any pains in attending upon that, when all that comes of ſuch labour is for the draught. It is an ill ſign of our great backwardneſs to duty, that though the reaſon of it is more evident than we have for any thing we do, yet we ſeem never ſatisfied about it; this is in plain Engliſh, only to gain time, but by ſuch gaining time many have loſt their Souls. Who ſhall do in our ſtead the duty of that time which we ſpend in diſputing of duty? If we made ſuch a ſtir about our ordinary occaſions before we ſet our hand to them, we ſhould long ſince have ſtarved our bodies, and is there no danger of ſtarving our Souls?

I will ſay but this; it will be as

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ſad a conſideration to a poor Soul in hell as can well befall it, to remember that it has been buſie in doing little things all its days, and only thinking of this one great neceſſary thing. Something like this is mentioned with great confuſion, *Cant.* 1. 6. *Look not upon me*, &c. *my mothers children were angry with me, they made me keeper of the Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept.* How many ſuch Scare-crows are there in the world, that ſpend their time in hooping and making a noiſe in their neighbours field, while their own lies untilled, to their great ſatisfaction without doubt in Harveſt, and their comfortable ſuſtentation in Winter; but every Body is beſt husband for himſelf, though I am perſuaded, if God ſhould try ſuch men another ſeaſon they would be wiſer.

2. Know that all labour even in Religion, that is leſs than this, is loſt labour: your hypocritical Chriſtian,

your half Chriſtian, your holy-day Chriſtian that makes only a recreation of Religion, is no Chriſtian; if we ſerve not God with our might, we throw away our Service, God ſcorns to be ſerved at that rate; how loathingly does he ſpeak of *Ephraim* upon ſuch an occaſion, *Hoſ.* 7. 8. *Ephraim is a cake not turned, which* is no mans meat; but more dreadfully, *Rev.* 3. 15, 16. *Thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot, ſo then becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth.* He that wholly neglects God proclaims his own folly, but he that diſreſpects God by a careleſs ſerving of him, reflects diſhonour upon God himſelf, as if he deſerved no better, or would be put off with any thing. And yet (as if God alone might be impoſed on) every body is for doing his work as ſlightly as may be; they would not do any thing but what is purely neceſ-

neceſſary; they care not to have one dram of Holineſs more than will juſt carry them to Heaven, and that ſhall be meaſured according to the utmoſt charity of the greateſt Latitudinarians; oh tis a dangerous thing to be preciſe, and therefore you may obſerve that a Puritan (that is, one that would be as holy as he may, and contents not himſelf with the meaſure that the generality take up with) is the moſt troubleſom Perſon in the world, not as is pretended, for the trouble he is like to raiſe in the State, but for that he ſtirs in our own Conſciences, and the foil he puts upon our low, lifeleſs, liſtleſs behaviour in the things of God, by his higher, livelier and more ſpiritual Converſation. Oh this is that curſed Phariſaical temper that Chriſt inveighs againſt *Mat.*23.13. And yet how will theſe formal dead wretches applaud one another in their lukewarmneſs, and in effect, for the want

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of zeal toward God, and ſtrangeneſs to the power of Godlineſs which is quick and active. Forſooth theſe are your well tempered, moderate, prudent Men that make Religion tolerable and creditable, &c. I muſt confeſs ſuch men are fitter to make a Religion, than ſubmit to the true Religion. I admire their wiſdom more than their Holineſs, that can preſcribe to themſelves and others a fitter meaſure of Devotion than God thought good to require of us. They are for maintaining their manhood, & keeping up a virile, maſculine temper (as they are apt to phraſe it) unbroken with over anxieties, unbiaſſed by foreign influences, free from tranſports and extaſies of fear, grief, joy, zeal; all of this nature ſpeaks weakneſs, and befits children rather than Men; Content, I ſhall not contend with them, how well this becomes them, or how acceptable it will make them on earth; but this I muſt tell

tell them, that they which come to God muſt not come as Men, but as Children not going on their own legs, but as God leads them, not walking in their own Wiſdom, but by his will in a ſenſe of great weakneſs, various wants; and in this condition, it may not unbecome them to hang upon God, cry after him, be fond of him. You may evidence your ſelf a Man by your diſcretion, but you may better ſhew your ſelf a Child by your affection; and affection always works with violence ingaging our utmoſt ſtrength, and it is ſtrength and violence that muſt carry the Kingdom of Heaven, *Mat.* 12. 12. Salvation-work requires all diligence, our utmoſt endeavours; not that all this will make us worthy of Heaven, but that he which does leſs, by the ſleight he puts upon ſo glorious a Tender, is altogether unworthy of it, as Chriſt ſpeaks, *Mat.* 10. 37, 38.

3. Since our worldly buſineſs does not

not quit the coſt and care we are at, and it ſufficeth not ſlightly to engage our ſelves in religious matters; we have leaſure at leaſt to conſider whether it is Tantamount to lanch out into the vaſt ocean of univerſal obedience, which by temptations on all hands is ever tempeſtuous, where eſtate, honour, and life may probably be ſwallowed up, but by a timely caſting them over board, thy ſoul may ſafely get to harbour.

Chriſt allows us to conſider the coſts and dangers of ſuch a voyage, has told us of them himſelf, bid every one expect them; if we *will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, we muſt ſuffer perſecution.* When we ſet our ſelves againſt ſin in earneſt, we put our ſelves into battel, we muſt fight or fall, the Apoſtle thought it ſtrange he ſaw no blood drawn upon his *Hebrews*, Heb. 12. 4. We ſhould account of hard things, not think it ſtrange if our Faith ſhould be tried with fire,

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expect to looſe our ſtuff; for it is the manner of the Devil to take to the plunder, to break our order, and turn the edge of our zeal againſt him, into a concern for our treaſures.

You had as good never think of being Religious if you reſolve to continue rich, nay if you reſolve not to be poor, and vile, and miſerable in this world, if God ſees good to put you upon it for his ſons ſake.

This is the rate you may be a ſerious through-Chriſtian at. Is it worth while think you to venture upon a courſe wherein you can be aſſured of nothing more than loſſes and troubles, what think you?

I have but two things to encourage you with.

The one is, that if we eſcape theſe miſeries by deſerting God, we ſhall run our ſelves upon greater, we ſhall certainly go to hell where are torments intolerable and eternal, where we ſhall have none of thoſe good

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things to ſuſtain us, that we now ſtand ſo much upon, and in my judgment as good be without them a few moments, as for ever? and perhaps if by a voluntary reſignation you give them to God, he may forbear to take them from you; if he gets them from our hearts, he cares not ſo much to take them out of our hands.

The 2*d*. is, that beſides the comforts we enjoy here through hope, and Faith, and more unſpeakable enjoyments that righteous Souls have of God, you will have a gracious acceptance, a glorious entrance into everlaſting bliſs, glory, honour, peace, reſt, joy, immortality, and ſuch other things as God, and Chriſt, and Angels make an Heaven out of, do abide you; ſuppoſing all this is done in Chriſt, and for Chriſt, out of Faith and Love to the ever bleſſed Trinity. You ſee I deal plainly with you, I offer but two words againſt thoſe thouſand troubles that

integrity with God may engage you in. I have nothing to ſay, but there is a Hell and a Heaven in which our declining or ſubmitting unto theſe things will conclude.

And if theſe things ſignifie any thing, let me perſuade you to perfect Holineſs in the fear of God, and not to aim at, or take up with any degree, if it may be which you admire others for, and deſpair ever to attain your ſelves. Let it not ſuffice, that you are not guilty of all ſins, that you eſcape groſſer ſins, or that you do not ordinarily fall into ſuch ſins; but grudge at the leſt inclination to the neateſt, cleanlieſt ſins; at the vanity and inſpirituality of your mind, that you cannot always be intent upon the things of God, and keep pace with Angels in a conſtant, perpetual adoration of God, according to that good example of the Apoſtle, *Philip.* 3, 12, 13, 14.

Obj. But

Obj. But does God expect great Men ſhould be thus good? Sure it would not become them.

Anſ. 1. How does it become the great God?

2. God is no reſpecter of Perſons; there is the ſame Law for Rich and Poor to work by here, and to be judged by hereafter. *Rom.* 2.8,9, 10,11.

3. The greater you are, the greater are your opportunities, in reſpect of leiſure, intereſt, ability, and influence to ſerve and glorifie God; and greater are his expectations, and greater will be your account, and ſhall your diligence be leſs?

4. Becauſe the Lord Jeſus Chriſt has told us of the great difficulty of rich & great mens getting to Heaven, let them ſtrive the more; and if they cannot be ſaved as Rich men, let them become poor Men; you will not miſs any thing you part with to give Chriſt; it is a determined caſe by our Saviour himſelf. *Mat.* 18.8,9.

FINIS.